CHAPTER VIII

KNOWLEDGE, MAGIC, AND RELIGION

184 WHAT the Lesu man and woman do in their daily routine and in their social and ritual life has been described. The question arises: What is the body of knowledge and beliefs on which their actions are based? Much of the knowledge and all of the beliefs are common property, known to all, although there is some knowledge which is of a more esoteric nature. There is but little differentiation on the basis of sex, although of course knowledge of the crafts which are followed by one sex are known only to them. Men are not skilled in the intricacies of preparing taro, nor women in the art of house-building. But in familiarity with myths and folk-tales, in information about natural phenomena, in the comprehension of supernatural beliefs, there appears to be no differentiation between the men and women. However, the men do have a certain kind of esoteric knowledge not shared by the women. The *malanggans* are not supposed to be seen by the women, who, however, know that they exist and the myths concerning them, and participate in the rites. But they do not see the carvings when they are on display. This is a privilege only for the males.[1] The women are quite aware of their significance, although

[1] At Lesu the women did not look at the *málanggans*, but at Logagon, a village in another linguistic district about twenty-five miles away, and the centre of a mission, this custom had broken down, and the women went into the enclosure and looked at the carvings at the conclusion of the rites. So strong was the feeling, however, at Lesu, that when [534] I purchased a musical instrument called *Loanuat*, connected with a *malanggan* by the same name and taboo for women to see, the latter expressed no desire to see it. It was in a secluded part of my house, and the men went in to see and to play it, but the women, with perfect good taste, stayed on the other side of the house and did not attempt to go near the *Loanuat*, although they heard it being played. [p. 288]

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

the custodianship, the making, the care of them are in the hands of the men. 184

Of an esoteric nature also are magical spells. These are known only to the magicians, who are both men and women. The men, however, predominate in the art, and while there are women magicians (particularly in love magic), I heard of no women skilled in rain magic or black magic. The latter is the most secret of all magical knowledge, and surrounded with the most mystery.

With the exceptions just noted, knowledge is known to everyone; and it is small enough in content to make this easily possible.

KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge of practical pursuits, such as gardening, fishing, house-building, and hunting, has already been indicated in the description of the working of the economic organization. The long time (ten years) that the ground is left fallow, and the rudeness of the implements, the digging-sticks, for example, and the lack of variety in crops, indicates a not very extensive knowledge of agriculture. In the same way, the fact that houses have to be rebuilt every two years or so shows that house-building is not in the most efficient manner. Fishing is a lengthy process, involving the use of magic, the following of taboos, and also a certain degree of technique. In none of these occupations, so essential to life, are the quickest and most efficient methods used. Yet they are adequate under the circumstances. There is sufficient time and material to rebuild a house every two years. Gardens are productive enough to give the necessary food, and in the same way fishing and hunting bring in satisfactory returns. Food and shelter are attained without too much effort, even though the methods are based on a very incomplete knowledge of natural phenomena. 182

3:Chinnery G, E-5 (1929)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

197 The next group (a coastal language) is spoken at Tandis, Limba, Lang-inia, Lassu, Amba.

Then the group spoken at Lemasong, Konnos and Konobin, which is said to extend to the West coast villages—Lamau, Lambak, &c.

The next group is said to extend from Pinigindu to Bulu, and through the Lelet plateau villages across to Mesi and other villages on the West coast, the dialects differing slightly.

Another dialect is found at Logon, and extends past Karu into the Namatanai district.

184 614 616 In the social organization there are two main divisions, which agree geographically with the coastal linguistic distribution. From Kavieng to Fatmilak the people are divided into multiple totemic clans with matrilineal descent; from Limalaua to Karu dual organization with the Eagle and the Hawk representing the totems of the clans. The Karu organization is slightly complicated, as will appear later.

614 In both divisions the clans are sub-divided into smaller groupings, each one of which is in some way associated with ancestral ghosts *masolei* or *maselei* (Kavieng to Fatmilak) *misili* (Limalaua to Karu).

The multiple clans represented in the social organization of the people living between Kavieng and Fatmilak are as follow:—

Clan (*evil bung* or *pambong*).	Totem (*mani* or *manu*).	—
A—Monga Kamade	Bungbunga (Hornbill) ..	Fatmilak
	Bangbanga	Luaupul
Moga Kamade	Babanga	Madina
	Bangabanga	Lakurumau
Mogon Kamari	Awoi-iang	Ngavelus
B—Monga Nuas	Balus (Blue Pigeon)	Fatmilak
Monga Nungas	Valus	Lugagun
Mogong Ge	Valus	Ngavelus
C—Monga Muna	Minungak (Eagle)	Fatmilak
	Manungak	Lauaupul
Moga	Munungak	Madina
D—Monga Soluba	Arigaum (Hawk)	Fatmilak
Mariba	.. ..	Kafkaf
Maiba	Regaum	Lakurumau
	Tegaum	Luburus
Miwa	Tegum	Lamekot
	Tekaum	Ngavelus
E—Monga Kala	Harok (red bird nest in ground)	Fatmilak
Kale	Karuk	Lauaupul
Moga Kela	Aiuk	Lakurumau
	Iok	Fongalava
Kala	A Kua	Lamekot
	Guok	Nonapai
Mogong Kali	Kuok	Ngavelus
	Gok	Livitua
F—Monga Tiring or Tiri-in au (Frigate bird)	.. ..	Fatmilak
Tirin	.. ..	Lugagun
Tivinguru ..	.. ..	Lakurumau
	Raula	Fongalava